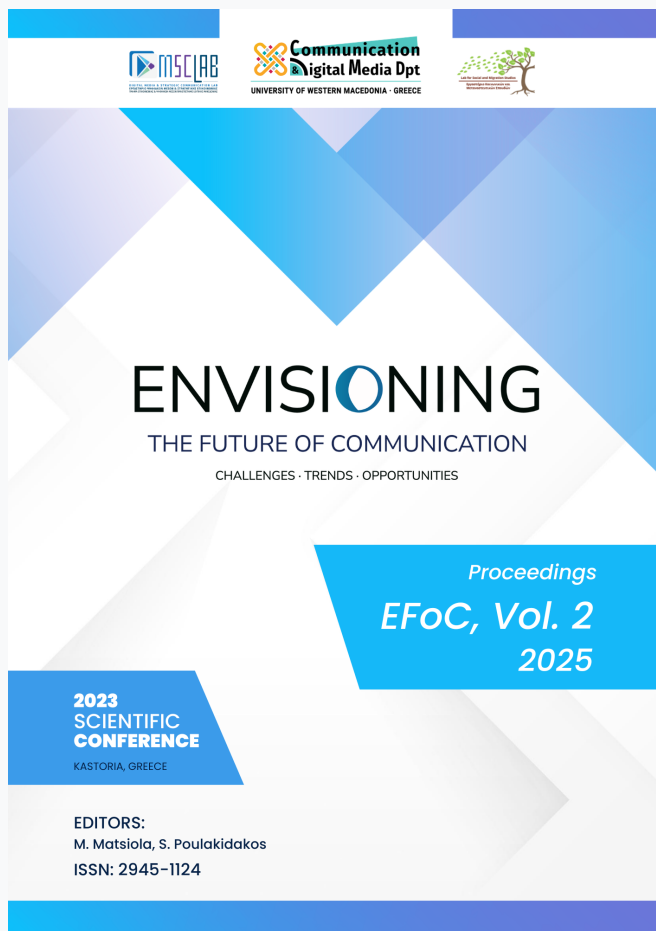


# Envisioning the Future of Communication

Vol 2, No 1 (2025)

Envisioning the Future of Communication - Conference Proceedings vol. 2



## Ideology and cultural references in shadow theatre

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doi: [10.12681/efoc.7923](https://doi.org/10.12681/efoc.7923)

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# **Ideology and cultural references in shadow theatre. The case of Karagiozis.**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is an ideological and cultural approach to the Shadow Theatre and in particular an episode of Karagiozis. The shadow theatre is approached as a timeless cross-cultural text, amenable to ideological, sociological and psychoanalytical approaches, while theatrical theatre or some form of folklore is outside its research objectives. Research material is the episode of the Shadow Theatre "Alexander the Great and the Cursed Serpent", as attributed to the VictoryMediaKids channel on the Youtube platform with hundreds of thousands of views. The approach of Karagiozis, through the analysis of the emitted message from the point of view of the popular - collective creator, as well as its reception/acceptance by the general, but also specific, children's, audience defines the different agents of meaning production in this theatrical genre. The starting point for the consideration of the material and the research motivation is the parallelism of dream images (manifest content) with the depictions of shadow theatre.

**Keywords:** ideology, culture, Karagiozis, thematic analysis.

## **Theoretical clarifications**

It is the concept of (re)performance that links theatre to ideology. Althusser (1999) in his definition of Ideology states people do not imagine, by means of ideology, their actual conditions of existence, the real world, but mainly they represent their relation to their conditions of existence. The ideological relation to the conditions of existence, as experienced as a matrix of symbolic and imaginary, rational and emotional parameters, highlights the role of theatre as a (re)representation of social life. In class-divided societies, exploitative mechanisms will be overlaid/concealed, mystifying the core of exploitation with a vast veneer of representations, while social conflict will be repelled/returned in the form of a symptom. The acceptance of these images/representations will constitute the two-way relationship between the representer and the represented, not only rendering the image of the social world but also structuring the subjects within it (Doxiadis, 1995). The adoption of both theatrical and social roles represent the social and institutional order, the role represents an entire institutional matrix of behaviour (Berger & Luckmann, 2003).

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Theatre and theatre performance can be seen as a miniature of society. The connections between performance and ideology extend throughout the theatrical event. All social classes together face their common fate through the theatrical plot. In the audience are hierarchically all economic strata, from the better off to those who attempted to enter without a ticket. In this small society the masses see and recognize the elites. The elites know that they attract the eyes of the many. They lead through their social functions as much as through the ideological/class overdetermination of theatrical practice. Everyone knows that “theatrical fire” will always be lit in the neighbors as they are presented on stage, but through identification it will also touch the real neighbors who sit a few seats away. The humble will match heroic deeds with noble lineage, admiring the display of grandeur on stage at the time of the theatrical crisis/bend, while they will defuse their social criticism, mainly through laughter, when the theatrical plot will highlight their human nakedness behind the veils of money and power (Althusser, 1998).

The root of shadow theatre is the popular celebration, the carnival (Kiourtsakis, 1985). This assumption opens up vast research and interpretive horizons. The folk feast is not divided into participants (performers) and spectators, everyone participates, it is a theatre without a ramp (Bakhtin, 2019). The world of the folk celebration occupies space and time, transforms the ordinary aspect of the world, abolishes hierarchies and norms, forcibly destroys the old in anticipation of the new. Bakhtin will introduce with their work the parameters of the popular laughter and the platonic - public celebration. This laughter is omnipresent, subverting and dismantling everything, giving a new - familiar face to the mundane as well as the otherworldly, degrading and ridiculing everything that causes fear and awe. The comic, the joke has a deep popularity, it is a counterpoint to the pretentious rituals of power, to the class seriousness of the upper classes, it responds with folly and madness to the insanity of the social hierarchy. The popular laughter/celebration is organized by the people for the people, gives form, even in the form of a joke, to popular expectations, while drawing conclusions from this inverted view of the world.

With this bibliographical device we refer to shadow theatre and the figure of Karagiozis. Karagiozis ideologically is a “blank” (Demertzis, 1996) as well as a “central” signifier (Demertzis & Lipovats, 1998). Although no one is as selfish, flighty, “hustler” etc., at the same time Karagiozis manages to symbolize the overall course of Romiosis. The interpretation and understanding of the messages of the show will take on different characteristics for individual individuals, while experiencing its messages as a collective. Horkheimer (1984) emphasizes that: The relationship between Being and consciousness is different in each social class, with this premise we approach social relations as they are refracted in this theatrical genre, producing both unifying and divisive meanings and performances. Remaining within the conceptual and evaluative theatrical realm seems just as limiting as the typical economic reductionism of theatricals to social practices. Theatrical figures are interpreted as bearers and supports of relations (Althusser, 1983),

acknowledging the mechanisms and practices, the historical and logical course of society reflected on them.

### **Thematic analysis**

This section draws on ideas from Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis in terms of the active role of Ideology. A conceptual constitution of themes (Tsiolis, 2018) was preferred, as opposed to a paratactic juxtaposition of analysis, in order to broaden the conceptual/contextual paths of thought. Parentheses and quotation marks are used to quote extracts from the theatrical dialogues when these are explanations rather than the body of the paper. The Theme is taken as the minimum analysed period of theatrical discourse, and this is usually a conceptually complete sentence of the theatrical figure.

The **coding** of the text (Appendix) yielded the following codes:

Violence Religion Monster

Language Victim Madness

Knowledge Sacrifice Fortune

Twin Ideology Sleep

Gender Comedy-ComicPoverty

Power Hunger Time/Space

Work Body Psychoanalysis

The **analytical themes** were constructed based on the literature review. Several codes could have had dual inclusion in the Themes, however, their inclusion was chosen on the basis of a more complete framing of the main theoretical definitions. The Themes are made up of the Codes as follows:

**Atoning Victim:** Victim, Sacrifice, Monster, Luck.

**Ideology:** Knowledge, Gender, Power, Power, Work, Ideology, Religion, Time, Space.

**Grotesque:** Violence, Hunger, Body, Sleep, Poverty, Psychoanalysis.

**Madness:** Language, Twin, Comedy-Comic, Madness

*The Mechanism of the Scapegoat*

When we refer to the mechanism of the expiatory victim, we are essentially drawing on René Girard's radical anthropological observations on biblical texts and myths. The starting point of the interpretations is the founding murder, the assumption that every great culture and tradition is established through the memory of a brutal murder. *The destinies of the horde have left indelible traces in human hereditary history, and in particular that the evolution of totemism, which encompasses the origins of religion, morality and social structure, is associated with the violent killing of the leader and the transformation of the paternal horde into a fraternal community* (Freud, 2012). The core of this memory will define human conceptions of the sacred, sacrifice, and ritual.

In the episode "Alexander the Great and the Cursed Serpent" the plot will evolve around the appearance of a monster in the local aqueduct. The popular saying that "dragons live in fairy tales" does not produce investigative results, instead it performs the same ideological function of obfuscation/recognition of the root cause. Girard (2017) highlights how the internal rivalries of human societies can sometimes take on the character of a generalized crisis, which can endanger the survival of the community. In these cases, generalized and diverse social contradictions will polarize around a central one, turning the destructive principle of "all against all" into "all against one", or of a weak group ethnically, culturally, class-wise, physically. He is the scapegoat, the foreigner, the handicapped, the homosexual, the "apothecary" of ancient Athens, the jester, ultimately the Other with a capital alpha. *This violence is truly single-minded, then it defuses the crisis that preceded it, reconciling the community at the expense of a single, unsuitable victim, who belongs to the class of what we colloquially call the scapegoat* (Girard, 2002).

The imaginary resolution of conflicts between community members by mass and universal participation in the murder (stoning, lynching, dismemberment) of the victim or in a ritual where the murder is carried out in public view by an executioner on behalf of the whole community, provides the psychological basis for the deification of the victim. Consensual violence becomes a key concept, since it will transform the guilty victim into an innocent/virtuous deity, while the pre-sacrificial terror will be transformed into peace and unity, this is the "divine substrate" of the victim the unification of the fragmented community. The massive psychological repression of the knowledge, on the part of the community, of the victim's innocence will be reversed as the divine surface of the new divinity. *Peoples do not invent their gods, they deify their victims* (Girard, 2002), recognizing that they cause an externally imposed unity, failing to recognize that it was not the victims who were monstrous, but the violence of the community that turned their appearance into hideousness. Let us not forget that in the memory of humanity there remain traces capable of revealing the accusations against the gods before they were deified (e.g. the aberrations of Zeus, the disability of Hephaestus, etc.).

The memory of unanimity, of the lull in conflict, will be reproduced in sacrificial practices, in the ancestral functions of theatre, sport, games, etc. While the carnival tradition is the echo of sacrificial practices without the brutality of sacrifice, the festive/evocative practices as studied by Bakhtin.

With this theoretical background, the codes "Monster", "Sacrifice", "Victim" and "Luck" are analysed. The "cursed serpent" recalls the biblical name of the devil of humanity, the one who initiates all conflicts between people, the desire for the good of the neighbor. In the name of the monster, in theological language, is expressed the representation of inter-social conflicts. The human origin of the monster is implied in dialogues "*Think what would have happened if this snake had not let us be able to draw water from the cistern*". The monster will superimpose itself on a human structure, not identifying with the elements of nature, while Karagiozis will address it as if it were a small child by petting it. In other words, the monster is both the god/protector of water and euphoria, the ricocheting social conflict over inequality in the possession of land and the product of human labor thereon. Deciphering the theatrical dialogues: "*That damned boa falls into slumber for a year, doesn't wake up, and we can water the whole region!*" The cursed snake reproduces in the collective imaginary the scene of fertilization through water (liquid) of the earth, a widespread motif of metaphor used in many cases by nationalist ideology (the blood of heroes fertilizes the earth). In human terms, a mythical king of the region managed to irrigate the area, boosting productivity, and was later accused of lust and murdered as a scapegoat. It can only be considered a coincidence that the reward for whoever killed the snake was a new reign in the place, which would obviously lead to the next murder. The new king would be reminiscent of Oedipus, having freed the place from a monster, at the same time as ruling in a despotic manner. After all, who would dare to question the ruler who saved his subjects from the monster? We should not be surprised that the collective creator of Karagiozis would not let Alexander the Great accept the reward for his deed. It is worth noting that Karagiozis the king of carnival and laughter, that is, of sacrificial judgment without the sacrifice, is the only one who can summon his predecessor, the deified king.

The episode's "Sacrifice" and "Victim" will confirm the biblical suggestions, as they ritually reenact the founding murder, appeasing the appetites of the deity, giving the community the right to obscure internal contradictions. In the course of history, the human victim will be replaced by sacrificial-sacred animals, as in the case of Ifigenia or Isaac. *The more acute the crisis, the more precious the victim must be* (Girard, 2017). This time the crisis is on the side of the audience, since the drama takes place with the "Greeks" as enslaved rajahs. The young girl who has to be sacrificed is not just any girl, she is the most precious of all, the daughter of Pasha.

"Violence" as a theme is the background of Girard's description of proclassical societies. This will also be analysed in relation to the body and the laughing "blows" of the clown, but here it has an

ontological character for human communities. Its echoes will be traced in the dismembered body ("*Get both your eyes out*"), in the joints of the paper-(semi-)dismembered figure of the shadow theatre. The heuristics of this route also gives results as to the fact of the draw by which the victim is chosen. The mere thought that this was done for the justice of things is blind to the popular wisdom that power would never leave itself exposed to the possibilities of chance. It follows from the foregoing that violence and divinity are the two sides of social competition. The exacerbation of violence leads to phenomena that people cannot interpret, so the interpretations take on mythical/divine dimensions. *Chance has all the traits of the sacred: sometimes it exercises violence against people, sometimes it benefits them* (Girard, 2017). Chance, like the sacred, will constitute an economy of violence, will reduce the mimetic dimensions of the crisis, let us recall what the otherwise childish ditty will tell us: "*how then they cast lots to see who would be eaten*" or that in Russian roulette chance will decide life and death without rights of retaliation.

#### *The carnival reception and the grotesque*

The carnivalesque reception of the shadow theatre is attributed to its crowning function, that of enthronement - dethronement. The process of the laughing process of the laughing process of enthronement - enthronement with the parallel undermining of an upcoming violent dethronement. The case of the jester - King Carnival is illustrative. The disestablishment, mockery, reversal (linguistic and physical) are initiated by the self-evident truth that nothing remains eternally in place, unchanged, armoured against the "turning of time". This principle governs the very plot of the episodes of Karagiozis, since the formal search for a job by the Vizier, the intercession of Hatziavati, the involvement of Karagiozis, the ridicule of the characters and finally their triumph or (and) demise, is interpreted as a comic emergence and installation of Karagiozis in the high culture of skilled labour, the open mockery and mockery of power and its social roles.

The occasion for this paper was the correlation of shadow theatre images with dream images. The code "Psychological Functions" reveals parallels with Freud's observations on dream work. Just as in the dream the "dream images" do not lead to the "dream content", so in shadow theatre interpretation cannot be limited to performativity. *Dream content appears as a transposition of dream ideas into another mode of expression. Our dream ideas are straightforwardly comprehensible when they become known to us. The dream content is available, as it were, in a hieroglyphic version, the signs of which must be transferred one by one into the language of dream ideas* (Freud, 2013). It is worth noting that the metaphorical action claims to be understood as literalism, the psyche itself, through repulsions, pushes in this direction (Jameson, 1999), while the pair "condensation/transposition" is also found in the theory of Ideology as "*metaphor/metonymy*" (Doxiadis, 1992:83). In the dream, the operations of Condensation, Transposition, Inversion and Secondary Processing are distinguished. For shadow theatre, Condensation provides the space for social and cultural references, the conceptual hierarchy

outside the quantitative appearance of images, Reversal for the interpretive use of opposites or twins, Transposition as a process of substitution/transference and finally Secondary Processing as a total reconstruction of psychic meanings.

Restoration, with the parallel victory of the old over the new, has roots in the lived world of ordinary people, in the cycle of life, the rural rites of passage and the very victory of life (every Spring) over yesterday (Kiourtsakis, 1985:152). With these processes man is connected totally, with the whole of the psychic apparatus and not only with the floating part of his conscious part. Laughter and deconstruction will in turn sacralize the simple and humble, give their true dimensions to desires and deconsecrate the false, the authoritative and the pompous. If we can represent laughter, then this is an "instant celebration". The laughing view of life is a more celebratory view of life, a more intimate and human aspect of life.

*Celebration was a form of the second life of the people, temporarily entering the utopian realm of universality, freedom, equality and abundance* (Bakhtin, 2019). The official celebrations with all the seriousness of power, with class and seriousness, celebrated the social status and yesterday; in contrast, the carnival celebrations were a ridicule of every monolithic narrative, of every authoritarian certainty; they materialized in practice the celebratory equality, they left room for an open and better tomorrow for all. The platonic-religious events cast a new form of historical consciousness, capable of forming the basis of consciousness for the Renaissance and the entry into modernity. This optimism will gestate the new, will turn the terrible into a funny fear, death into resurrection, the end into a beginning, the up into down, and will be depicted in the "wheel of fortune", in the territorialized continuous roll with the human body as its radius. "Up" and "down" have here an absolute and strictly topographical meaning. Above is heaven; below is earth; and earth is a devouring principle (the grave, the womb) and a generative, regenerative principle (the mother's womb). This is the topographical meaning of above and below in their cosmic aspect above is the face (head), below is the genitals, the abdomen and the buttocks (Bakhtin, 2019). Above are the authorities, their spiritual functions; below are the people with their "humble" instincts of the abdomen and digestive system.

This is the biblical overview of "this Low and High" (Kiourtsakis, 1985:287), the Karagioz of us all. The jester of our childhood where he lives in his own space and time, that of utopia and timelessness. With the above as a vehicle, we run through the remaining codes: Violence, Body, Hunger, Poverty, Sleep.

*"All the values which, in our societies, are usually considered "higher-higher" ideas and emotions, romantic loves, heroic acts, sacred symbols, official institutions, offices, titles are transmuted into bodily needs and functions, into food and material goods, all are systematically displaced, transferred to this "lower" region; in a word, they are degraded"* (Kiourtsakis, 1985:77). The body of Karagiozis is the people and their needs/paths, it is a body in opposition to classicism (M.

Alexander), a body next to death and rebirth rather than in the midst of life (youth), a body open with holes and bulges, devoured and dismembered, rough and a-continuous. Its bodily derivatives (urine, faeces) are a 'merry matter' (Bakhtin, 2019), as these connect it to the mother earth, it is familiar as they are its own production. Bodily functions with relative (unconscious) ease lead to the familiar animalistic pictorial representations of Karagiozis, just as is the case with phallic substitutions.

The "hand" and the "hump" of Karagiozis are top impressions, as this will introduce us to the codes of the legendary "Hunger" and the constant blows - "Violence". *The genitals may be represented in the dream by other parts of the body, the penis by the hand or the foot (...) the bank and the bed signify conjugal life, in the dream the table substitutes for the bed wherever possible, and the complex of sexual representations is transferred to the complex of eating* (Freud, 2013). In the grotesque tradition and in fairy tales, the body parts are separated, conscious of their own existence, living their own lives. If we look back to the images of the Satyrs of antiquity, obviously the hand of Karagiozis is the castrated phallus, not only of size or structure, but because of its own fertilizing will, its special connection with the world *"this hand beats and steals, resists and grabs, struggles and expresses itself; with it, the body of Karagiozis transcends the limits of the normal body, goes out more effectively into the world and communicates with it more deeply"* (Kiourtsakis, 1985: 193). In our episode we encounter the classic phallic substitution with the size of the nose, as the colics in the familiar theme of military weighing-weighing will complain that their father's nose bothers them.

The hunchback of Karagiozis is the dipole of the belly, a belly in reverse, but this one metabolizes not food but wood. The moment after Karagiozis has revealed the lie about killing the monster is typical, just after he has been forcibly expelled from the palace and the wedding table he will say: "Hey! You mummy! Don't ask what I ate here (hump), ask what I ate here (belly)". The beating and violence impressively permeate every episode of the shadow theater as well as the one being analyzed. Violence seems to break the deadlock, to interrupt an endless order, to punish, to discipline; after all, violence is a generic equivalent, a physical kind of money with which to pay, buy, risk, reward. The moment of Hatziavati's beating after the revelation of his own lie about the "damned snake" is telling, when the Vizier will call the guard to punish him. When addressing Dervenaga, the central personification of state repression, Karagiozis will state: "Ouch! He's shouting at the central cashier too". The life and sufferings of the Clown are steeped in physical and economic violence; the life of the people is pinned down by the silent violence of the ruling classes. It is more than heartbreaking to see the moment in which the Clown continues his reaction of beating, even after the dervish has stopped beating him:

Clown: Oh, wait! Let me talk to you! Let me tell you!

Dervenagas: Why are you acting like that, boy?

Clown: A! Have you stopped? You didn't warn me!

The dialogues will confirm that "*power is exercised over bodies*" (Doxiadis, 2001:104).

Returning to the earlier theme of the scapegoat, it is this violence that will link the body to the dismembered Bacchic corpse of the founding murder, Bakhtin will cite the 'September pulp' (2019), while the transformation of social rivalries into eating contests as '*kitchen re-enactments*' (2019). "*Wood is by definition inseparable from physical drama; it encapsulates the fierce competition of men for survival, social violence, coercion, the oppression of man by man through the use of material power*" (Kiourtsakis, 1985:266).

Karagiozis' "Hunger" has a clear and inverse relationship with Rabelais' narratives. The mythical gluttons here have been transformed into deprivation and social critique, much more so in the episode Karagiozis will imply that the people are not only deprived, but consume the unhealthy leftovers of the dispossessed world:

Copperhead: What food do we have, Father?

Clown: Swab stew!

The image of deprivation seems to have absorbed the pleasure of sex as well. In the episode, Karagiozis is not looking forward to marrying the Vespriopoula, more reminiscent of a critique of the marriage financial/family contract, going back on his words: "If I find an interest I'll remarry! Poor you!". The social reductions of the Greece that gave birth to Karagiozis, prudery and family honour will deprive his carnival tradition of its orgiastic elements, will remind us of the sexual deprivation and refraction of the reproductive image, as it is prevalent in the rebetiko song.

The code of "Poverty" is not particularly massive and could be incorporated along with "Hunger". Quantitatively, ten (10) records will be counted, but at the same time social representations from the triangles of social division are rendered. When the Cursed Serpent kills Zaban Aga the barefoot clown will say: "Let him have his shoes, man!". This code takes on the character of a social critique and is not linked to the euphoric images of Bakhtin's analyses. It differs from Karagiozis' "Hunger", as it goes far beyond its saturation and is more openly linked to social references.

Social class, while being an economic category, is experienced by the subjects as a cultural reality (Demertzis, 1989). The society of the neo-Hellenic Karagiozis is a transitional society towards modernity; the Karagiozis is a newly urbanized inhabitant of the city, with strong connections to the village. His shack is the symbol of the slum, the world of the "barefoot" of the city. This world lacks the pre-modern certainties, it is a disembodied world with the subjects disappeared (Lekkas, 2011), their analytical tools come from yesterday while living a rapidly changing today. The class oppositions of the city are repositioned by the collective creator in yesterday, the Turkish figures declare that for ordinary people not much has changed, rayans remain for power, poor for economy,

objects of violence for state institutions. The utopian elements of the shadow theatre appear exclusively in the epic episodes, in those connected to the mountain, where the glamour of the Revolution presents a more just world. The course of social events transformed the manly thieves of the struggle into thieves of daily survival.

In this light, the individual ideology of Karagiozis is equivalent to social criticism, since this is the subjective aspect of social life (Doxiadis, 2017). His mischievousness, extreme individualism and philia can be interpreted as a profound "indictment" of the hypocrisy of social roles, the impersonal character of city life, the openly unfair way of production/distribution of social wealth. The clown lives "in the desert of the Real" (Zizek, 2003), in a world without vision, without hope, without imagination, he recognizes the raw truth about the real and can endure it without the idealizations of ideology. Through this truth and inversions we can and do laugh, we connect as an audience with it. Karagiozis is not a role model, his social figure does not produce perspective, we cannot follow his example. The history of the country in the mid-20th century will for the first time provide figures of social change, but it may be through this masquerade that we can unmask the lies that govern our social world.

In light of the above, the code of "Sleep", as an escape, is also approached by Karagiozis. It is a sleep antidote and substitute for "Hunger", comforting as well as dead-end, as Karagiozis answers in it that he is asleep. Karagiozis's sleep is not a temporary escape from the unbearable reality of poverty/suffering in his dream meals. *We escape into Reality in order to escape from the truth of our desire as expressed in the dream* or else *Reality is an imaginative construction that enables us to cover the Real of desire* (Zizek, 2006). The Clown escapes the unbearable weight of his dream's desire for a just society in reality, escaping with an alibi of his wiles as an ideology to cynically confront a dead-end world.

#### *Ideology as an active component of reality*

The cohesive role of ideology can synthesize the disparate meanings of the creator, the audience, the different epochs that meet on the blank canvas and in the real time of the performances. We start with "Space" and "Time" as they are reflected in the theatrical dialogues.

The space of the performance is the pre-modern space, the space as it is constituted and appropriated (Poulantzas, 2008) by the subjects of the great state, with its alleys and mahalades, while it has not yet undergone the processing of nationalist ideology. The references (mainly to water supply) are to the outskirts of the city, or more generally 'the place'. The authority of the vizier does not concern the territory of the nation or the empire, but rather a local authority. The references to other cities highlight the view of the area from the perspective of trade rather than the single national continuum.

The time of the performance is the rural cyclical time. This observation governs not only the perception of time as a subjectification of reality, but the perceptual/mental basis of the entire era. From the appearance of the "Beast" to the curses "bad time to be had", everything has a cyclical and recurring course. On an ideological level they symbolize repetition without the prospect of change. Time in the course of the performance will "curve" ideologically under the intervention of ideology in two instances. First: the moment of recognition of Karagiozis by Alexander the Great. Second, the hero's prayer before the battle with the "Cursed Serpent". The Greek-Christian continuum knows no historical limitations in popular consciousness, so Alexander will (re)recognize his biological descendant and great comedian Karagiozis, while his "Christian" prayer should not be a problem for the audience, the hero and the theatrical environment are so familiar, so they certainly obey the modern form of religious consciousness.

The codes "Ideology" and "Religion" refer to obvious statements in the dialogues as much as to a deeper over-definition of meanings. In the texts there are references to the Virgin Mary, Christ, Allah, as well as to moments in the history of the Greek nation. Perhaps the most ideological moment of the episode is the lying on the part of the lower classes in the face of power, the deceitful attempt to reap the rewards of an act they did not do and their subsequent just punishment. At the same time, the noble hero will deny his reward, invoking the greater good as a noble motive. The moment of our heroes' rehabilitation and the realization/acceptance of their social position is riveting, as the laughter and symbolic upheaval of the world will be transformed into a new and superior legitimization of the existing order.

"Work" as a code revolves around the classic tale of Karagiozis with Hatziafati, while the episode itself does not elevate the comic hero to some specialized function, e.g. that of a Doctor or Scientist. Interestingly, the state official's view that all work should be paid for. "Power" has the characteristics of pre-modern power, it appears organized around the two religions, having paternal characteristics. Karagiozis' desire to become the son-in-law of the Vizier, to become part of the elite recalls Freire's words (1974) *The oppressed feel an irresistible attraction to the oppressor and his way of life. To participate in this way of life becomes a powerful desire*. In the absence of an alternative, the only model is that of the oppressors. The celebration of Karagiozis' enthronements (in many episodes) shows the power of community, family and blood in these societies, ties that will later turn into patronage/patronage client relationships (Michael, 2015). The distance we feel separated from key parameters of the social organization of the show should not surprise us. They are the values of a bygone era. Within our familiar analytics lives modernity (Jameson, 2007), which refracts and deforms what in the episode seems immovable.

The image of women in the show carries all the stereotypical weight of the society of the time. The code word "Gender" will describe Ayse as the wedding prize of the throne, Aglaia as the occupant of the private spaces of the shanty, "Woman, let'seat!", while bravado will be identified with the

nation's eternal neanderthal, Alexander the Great. Karagiozis' description of the imaginary rite of passage conveys images of serenade and love of the time.

The code of "Knowledge" is perhaps the best introduction to the theme of "Madness", as Karagiozis' inverted/rejected knowledge becomes the point of identification. Knowledge in the episode, as in the literature, derives from authority, revealing self-evident, as well as misunderstood truths.

*The history of madness and the comic*

In popular tradition as much as in the view of Karagiozis, historical forms of interpretation of "Madness" survive. In folk legends, the alafroishkios has in folk legends a special relationship with the absolute of knowledge, a knowledge that will often be identified with magic or ultimate evil. *The illusory images of the blind parachute are nothing but the great knowledge of the world* (Foucault, 2004). Karagiozis' knowledge touches the deepest contemplation, far surpassing the habitus of Hatziavati and all of us. It is his own inversions of reality that reveal, through foolishness, our own "false consciousness", our ideological/existential misunderstandings of truth. From this residue of truth, from this misunderstood meaning, we will be able to ideologize, as a joke, his message. The different relationship/analogy of repression and idealization of truth is the basis of the crowning of Karagiozis as King of Laughter, a leader of Madness as much as of avarice, laziness, pleasure, foolishness, gluttony and sloth. Let us toil in a world that daily belies our labours, the ragged King has told us from childhood the truth. It is only on this ground that the multitude of references within the play that we are about to see comedy can be interpreted. As the secondary processing of the dream (Freud, 2013), surprised by the power of our desire, will censor it within the dream, revealing to us the unacknowledged truth: "it is only a dream". The same will happen in shadow theatre, the truths you heard "are just comedy"...

The "Language" of shadow theatre and clowning is a whole world. Riddles, military orders, wishes, curses, praise, expressions of love and harsh truths will accompany the dialogues. The language of Karagiozis renews the worn-out meanings of seriousness, transforming the subject into a creator of reality rather than a prisoner within its system. The regularity of meanings seeks to fix at every point the earlier moments of social becoming, emphasizing the truths of yesterday, the eternal truth of power (Voloshinov, 1998). The language of laughter incorporates desire, social action and struggle into the linguistic becoming, opening up the range of possibilities for human intervention. Here the parallel world of the people lives directly in the language of celebration. The motif of degrading linguistic digression (Freud, 2016) remains classic, which escalates to the direct expression of repressed emotions e.g. the Karagiozis will "wish" the outgoing Hatziavati "Good riddance!" Highlights of the language of shadow theatre include Karagiozis' addressing of Pasha as a colleague and his cheeky judgement to Alexander the Great that he "is a fool with a

helmet". The celebratory - platitudinous language will reach, together with the "Madness" factor, a frenzied delirium capable of revealing obscured aspects of reality.

"Comic" as a code word highlighted the parallel world of laughter, folly and jokes. Its point of departure starts from the mirror stage (Lacan, 1979), that decisive moment of the formation of the ego for each subject. The constitution of the unified ego, in the light of a dominant discourse, cannot take on the character of a mere reflection. *The consciousness of the oppressed is usually a contradictory amalgam of the values of the oppressors which they have assimilated and of concepts that flow more directly from their practical experience* (Eagleton, 2018). The mirror of the self-consciousness of the plebeian strata will take on the characteristics of the humble face of literature, laughter, parody and comedy. High art, tragedy, the aspects of power concern the higher acts of the elites, who consider the values of the people "low" and the popular theatre equally low art. This world was and will remain foreign to them, as foreign as abundance and luxury are to our poor hero.

## Conclusions

This paper has attempted a re-interpretation of a kind of popular - children's theatre, "*an analytical leap, not subject to conditions, over the shadow*" (Sagriotis, 2003:141) of shadow theatre. Through thematic analysis, we approached in a special way what is considered nationally proprietary and proved to be familiar as part of a global carnival-festive heritage. "*The local and the foreign, the national and the global communicate much more profoundly than academic chauvinisms teach in all countries of the world*" (Kiourtsakis, 1985:14). In the world of the birdean society the pre-modern foundations of the modern ideology of society, the ground of what we would call the nootropy (Lipovats, 1991) of the modern Greek, can be discerned.

Most sociological and ideological analyses in shadow theatre, in Karagiozis, but also in the wider tradition of the grotesque leave a 'bitter taste' of a dead-end dystopia of the absolute stripping of the subject. The consoling action of laughter does not seem capable of alleviating social and physical drama, hunger and violent blows. Instead, it can become a laughing release/engagement of the prevailing order. Maybe we expect a lot from a children's show, maybe it is just a comedy, in any case the carnivalesque deconstructions of hierarchies in shadow theatre maintain structures by inverting meanings, reveal truths, but cannot transform them. What is most critical is to transform the world we live in into a more human one, not just to temporarily "turn things upside down". The society that spawned shadow theatre could not logically have stepped outside the narrow horizon of its time. But within the 20th century a new social subject, the working class, capable of providing a historical outlet, was gestated. *The Fool-King does not merely represent a temporary carnival suspension of Order, reminding us of the instability of things in their eternal cycle, the great Wheel of Fortune, but begins to function as a founding figure of a New World*

*Order* (Zizek, 2005). Somehow laughter and celebration will become rites of passage for humanity's march from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

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